DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 358 895 JC 930 329

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TITLE Revitalization of the ESL Program on the Rockville Campus of Montgomery College, and the Matter of Credit for ESL Courses.
INSTITUTION Montgomery Coll., Rockville, Md.
PUB DATE 90
NOTE 23p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS College Credits; College Planning; Community Colleges; *Credit Courses; Educational Change; *Educational Policy; English (Second Language); English Curriculum; Foreign Students; Interprofessional Relationship; Management Systems; *Multicampus Colleges; Policy Formation; Position Papers; Program Development; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS Montgomery College MD

ABSTRACT

In 1990-91, the Rockville Campus (RC) of Montgomery College (MC) in Maryland, revised its English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) program to make it more responsive to student needs and begin offering ESL courses for institutional credit in fall 1991. Faculty at MC's Takoma Park Campus (TPC), however, objected to RC's proposed changes, particularly to offering credit for ESL credit courses. This report responds to TPC's objections and sets forth the position of the Department of Reading and ESL at RC, making the case for granting academic credit for ESL courses at the community college level. Following a brief description of the background of ESL and program revitalization at MC, the paper defines institutional credit and emphasizes its importance in the ESL program. Next, the case for granting credit to ESL courses is presented. Arguments presented include the following: (1) credit for ESL courses is a mainstay for academic revitalization; (2) credit is required if ESL courses at MC are to be comparable to those at other institutions, and credit is warranted on the basis of course content; (3) ESL courses are not manifestly remedial; (4) course credit benefits students by increasing motivation through positive reinforcement; and (5) credit for ESL is vital in order to fulfill the institutional mission and to remain competitive. Finally, arguments expressed by TPC faculty against credit are presented and refuted, including the arguments that ESL is "precollege" instruction, credit may skew the grade point averages for foreign students, and ESL is not language study and should not be rewarded since English is the "official language" at MC. Contains 25 references. (PAA)

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REVITALIZATION OF THE ESL PROGRAM ON THE ROCKVILLE CAMPUS OF MONTGOMERY COLLEGE, AND THE MATTER OF CREDIT FOR ESL COURSES

By

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JC 930 329

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Revitalization of the ESL Program on the Rockville Campus
Of Montgomery College, and
The Matter of Credit for ESL Courses
by
John K. Bolton, D. A.,
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Background

Montgomery College is a comprehensive community college with campuses located in the Maryland suburbs of Washington, D. C. at Germantown, Rockville, and Takoma Park. The College serves a multicultural community. In a total enrollment approaching 30,000 students, approximately 7,000 are non-native speakers of English.

Montgomery College has offered instruction in ESL since 1972. Since its inception, ESL has evolved significantly, and most recently in a non-credit sequence of three intensive course levels offered in Continuing Education and four levels and three tracks (Grammar-Composition, Reading, and Aural Comprehension and Speaking) offered by academic departments. The latter have been offered for institutional credit since Fall 1991 on two campuses, at Rockville (with the larger enrollment) and Takoma Park. The Germantown Campus plans to offer ESL for the first time in the Fall of 1993.

In 1990-1991, the Rockville Campus overhauled the ESL program to make it more responsive to student needs and more "up to speed" with community college ESL practices in the U. S. The faculty further perceived the revisions to be in keeping with the College President's call for renewal of curricular and governance structures blended with a total quality management approach locally known as "Revitalization." Following approval of ESL courses for credit within the new program, Takoma Park Campus faculty took issue with the changes, and particularly objected to institutional credit. Their action brought the course adoption process to a halt pending resolution of the issue. The resolution eventually included institutional credit for ESL courses.

The enclosed report, making a case for credit for ESL at the community college level, is essentially a response to Takoma Park objections.

The report includes a memorandum of transmittal, an Executive Summary, Discussion, and References.

The author gratefully acknowledges generous contributions of materials and helpful critiques provided by Professors Usha Venkatesh, Jean Van Meter, William Walcott, and by Dean Philip Mancha.

Readers with questions or comments may contact Dr. John K. Bolton, Jr., Professor of English (ESL), Montgomery College, Rockville MD 20850 (301) 251-7408.

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE
Department of Reading and English as a Second Language
Rockville Campus

14 March 1990

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Antoinette P. Hastings, Provost

VIA: Dr. Philip E. Mancha, Instructional Dean

FROM: Department of Reading and English as a Second Language
William H. Walcott, Professor and Chair

SUBJECT: Revitalization of the ESL Program on the Rockville Campus and The Matter of Credit for ESL Courses

The EL and RD courses which the Provost approved for Credit in November, 1990, have again been challenged.

This time, a memorandum to the President by four members of the Takoma Park Faculty has caused this issue to be reviewed in a process determined by the Office of the President.

The enclosed report is in compliance with this review. It sets forth the considered position of this Department on this matter. Following an Executive Summary is an extensive discussion of the issues.

If there are questions, either Professor John Bolton or I would be pleased to answer them.

We urge the Provost to support our conclusion. It is imperative that the courses be sustained as approved and as reaffirmed. In a department-wide poll taken this week, 97.5% of our students said they wanted these courses for credit! We urge recommendation to the Office of the President that our courses be permitted to be offered for institutional credit. beginning in the Fall Semester of 1991.

Thank you.

Revitalization of the ESL Program on the Rockville Campus Of Montgomery College, and The Matter of Credit for ESL Courses

by John K. Bolton, D. A., Professor of English and ESL

Executive Summary

This report sets forth the position of the Department of Reading and English as a Second Language in the matter of granting academic credit for ESL courses in the context of ongoing revitalization of the ESL program which these courses, previously approved by the Provost, constitute. The following is a summary of the discussion which is in the ensuing pages.

1. **A definition of the Issues** (p. 1)

   1.1 Credit an indispensable part of the program
   1.2 What Institutional Credit means

2. **The Case for Institutional Credit.**(p. 1)

   2.1 Credit for EL and RD courses essential to implement **Standards of Progress**.(p. 2)
   - A mainstay for academic revitalization.

   2.2 **Course comparability** necessitates credit.(p. 3)
   - Credit needed to make MC's ESL courses comparable to ESL courses in other schools.
   - Credit **warranted** on the basis of **course content**.

   2.3 Approved **EL and RD** courses manifestly **not remedial**. (p. 3)
   - Campuses agree on this.
   - "Remedial" an unmerited and prejudicial stigma.

   2.4 **Students benefit** from credit (p. 4)
   - Motivation and reinforcement.
   - Rouche and other scholars support this finding.

   2.5 Relevant **research and scholarship support credit**. (p. 5)
   - Review of literature (17 sources, including our Faculty)
   - Strong rationale from diverse sources justifies credit.

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2.6 Credit vital to fulfill **institutional mission** and remain **competitive**. (p. 7)
- Realities of demography.
- Realities of the academic marketplace
- Cost effectiveness of ESL for credit.

2.7 **Limitation** on credit: (p. 9)
- None proposed below EL 101 level

2.8 **Transferability** between the campuses is **NOT an issue**. (p. 10)
- The issue is placement
- Not a problem as a result of credit.

2.9 ESL **program revitalization** on the Rockville Campus **well-grounded** (p. 10)
- Faculty are well-informed.
- Faculty part of national (and international) mainstream of ESL thinking

3. The Case against Credit for ESL Courses (Takoma Park).(p. 11)

3.1 **Major objection**: ESL is **"precollege"** instruction; does not merit credit. (p. 11)
- Inconsistent with Takoma agreeing that courses are not remedial.
- Objection not supported by Middle States (p. 12)
- **Middle States: institutional credit for ESL "standard treatment"**
- Sequence of courses not inconsistent with EN 101, as alleged.

3.2 **Minor objections**: (p. 13)

- Credit may **"skew" GPAs** for internationals. (The skew is imaginary.)
- Until students have **101 "tools"** they should not get credit. (Students are already getting credit in other courses without EN 101 "tools.")
- ESL is academic preparation, **not language study**. (Labels do not diminish the academic integrity of the approved courses).
- **English is the "official language"** of Montgomery College.
- There may be **legal problems** in offering ESL for credit. (This red flag is full of holes).

Conclusion: (p. 15) International students are promises, not problems. They deserve credit, as do their courses. It is an ethical as well as an academic and institutional imperative.

It is the right thing to do.

Revitalization of the ESL Program on the Rockville Campus Of Montgomery College, and The Matter of Credit for ESL Courses

by John K. Bolton, D. A., Professor of English and ESL

Discussion.

1. A Definition of the Issues

1.1 Credit an indispensable part of the program.

The Rockville ESL faculty have asserted their leadership in evaluating the ESL program, in place and unmodified since the 1970s, and in developing courses and a program structure. An indispensable part of this structure involves new courses in EL and RD for credit. Credit is an inherent and indispensable part of the program, for reasons detailed hereinafter. **The issue simply is, will the revitalization of the ESL Program at Rockville, as previously approved by the Provost who had followed procedures mandated by the College, be allowed to continue, or will negative, ad hoc, extraprocedural, and groundless argumentation impede this progress?** The issues revolve around this simple question.

1.2 What Institutional Credit means

"Institutional Credit," as proposed in the Course Proposals and approved by the Provost means: 1) Students will be awarded the grades A -- F 2) Grades will be posted on the student's transcript 3) Grades will be counted, along with all other courses attempted, in the student's GPA 4) The credits earned in EL and RD courses will not be applied to the Associate Degree or the Certificate at Montgomery College. As the approved Catalog descriptions for the new courses read, "Three credits. Credit calculated for the CQPA, but not applicable to the A. A. Degree or the Certificate."

2. The Case for Institutional Credit.

The following factors were given careful consideration by the Rockville Faculty when the courses were designed. Each of these factors was explained in some detail to Faculty and Administrative Staff from Takoma who contend that the Exploratory EL and RD courses should not be offered for credit.

2.1 Credit for EL and RD courses essential to implement Standards of Progress.

The College's recently adopted Standards of Progress policy and the collateral procedures for dealing with the standards are the heart of the academic revitalization which the College is beginning to experience. **Credit for ESL courses will pull international students into the rest of the student population with respect to these standards** and the various regulatory and counseling procedures available through the standards' application. **Without credit, international students in ESL courses are exempt from the regulations** They would be further marginalized and distanced from the counseling procedures available to the general student population. Credit in ESL courses is necessary for the Standards of Progress to apply to all students.

Moreover, credit contributes to academic revitalization in ESL because credit gives the program academic integrity, and its faculty added motivation and reinforcement. This revitalization, a built in premise of the original course proposals' justification for credit, is not only a matter of program esteem within the College and from the standpoint of community recognition, it is essential for reasons of evaluation and accountability. CQPAs are the quantifiable measure used for such studies as rates of progress by course, comparisons of ESL success and success in other courses. Revitalization is not gratuitous: it requires work, and this work requires the types of measurement which only credit accords.

2.2 Course comparability necessitates credit.

Credit is required if ESL courses at Montgomery College are to be comparable to ESL courses in other community colleges which offer ESL for academic purposes (see Attachments 4 and 5). If our courses are not offered for credit they will not be comparable (or competitive). From one institution to the next, faculties and administrations have concluded that inherently, these courses merit credit. Comparability is thus not a matter of "keeping up with the (academic) Joneses," but more a function of **adhering to a standard** based on the intrinsic academic "worth" of these courses, which has become a matter of universal recognition. Credit is merited.

If one analyzes the course content and texts for the approved EL and RD courses in the context of levels of difficulty and intellectual challenge associated with college-level work, the inescapable conclusion is, these courses are "in line" with other college courses for which credit is routinely

given. As TESOL[1] (1986) puts it, "...the material studied in these ESL courses demands the highest level of second language proficiency, including knowledge of contrastive phonetic, syntactic, semantic, and rhetorical information (studies that do not equate with remediating first language skills)..."

Indeed, if one were to compare the text and syllabus of the lowest level ESL course with those of any Modern Foreign Language (e.g., SN, GR, FR, etc.) 101-level course, one would find the ESL course to be more demanding -- cognitively as well as linguistically. Moreover, the medium of instruction in ESL is in the same language as the material of instruction, whereas the language of instruction in SN, GR, or FR 101 is English, not Spanish, German or French.

Other community colleges (and four-year schools) grant credit because it is merited. Credit is thus needed for our courses to be comparable to those in other community colleges where ESL is offered in programs where the orientation is English for Academic Purposes (EAP). The program in which the approved exploratory courses are situated[2] is an EAP (English for Academic Purposes) as opposed to an ESP (English for Special Purposes[3]) program.

Since 1988, both the Rockville and Takoma Park Campuses have agreed and affirmed that the Montgomery College ESL orientation in the Campuses' programs is English for Academic Purposes, not ESP[4].. Bolton (1988) found that in community colleges offering EAP programs with a course structure consisting of levels and tracks (as does that outlined for the Rockville Campus), granting credit of some kind is the overwhelming practice. In a more recent study, "ESL Programs in 40 Community Colleges" (1990) undertaken by members of the ESL Program Review Committee, credit in ESL/EAP courses is more specifically related to individual courses as well as

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[1] TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) is the international professional association for ESL teachers and applied linguistics scholars at all levels worldwide. TESOL is a non-national, non-political member of the United Nations.

[2] The need for research to confirm the appropriateness of the program's structure (see Attachment 1) or to modify it before the permanency of catalog publications sets in is a main rationale for these courses -- including their credit-bearing properties -- to be exploratory.

[3] "Special Purposes" means oriented to what Cummins (1986) calls BICS, Basic Interpersonal Communications Skills, or in our context, English for work, English for knowing how to ride on the Metro, English for dealing with Immigration, English for surviving in American Society.

[4] BICS and ESP are more the province of Continuing Education, and are a very legitimate educational undertaking for the College.

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to programs generally. What emerges from this is, if one were to actually compare the catalog descriptions in the approved EL and RD courses with those in the catalogs of most institutions offering ESL/EAP, two inescapable conclusions would emerge: 1) Our courses compare to those offered by most other community colleges with ESL/EAP; 2) The overwhelming pattern is, these courses are credit-bearing -- and not always just for institutional credit, but frequently for credit leading to a degree..

2.3 The approved EL and RD courses are manifestly not remedial.

NOTE: The Takoma faculty agree on this point!

For reasons explained above (2.2) it is obvious that instruction in language acquisition is not remedial. Levels of linguistic and cognitive complexity and difficulty argue against the "remedial" label. Furthermore, the label is inappropriate on the grounds that there is nothing to "remediate" in the sense of "making up for that which was missed," which may be the case with native speakers of English whose K-12 schooling was deficient. International students (many of whom are already bilingual in languages in addition to English and linguistically sophisticated) have nothing to remediate, just something new to learn. "Remedial," is thus an unfair stigma. It discriminates against non native speakers of English and it is inherently pejorative, creating distance between students who are already marginalized and the academic and socioeconomic mainstream to which they aspire.

2.4 Students benefit from credit: Motivation and reinforcement.

The Rockville ESL and Reading faculty associate themselves with Rouche and Snow (1978) who argue for the establishment of at least institutional credit as a matter of positive reinforcement for developmental and ESL students. One remembers Rouche's eloquent presentation of this point when he served as a Consultant to the College a few years ago. ESL students, it is claimed, will do better in the rate and the quality of their learning when they are motivated by credit. Motivation is indeed a causal factor in second language acquisition to the point where its place is not questioned by the literature in the field. (For summaries on the issue of motivation and second language acquisition, see Gardner, 1979; Cummins and Swain, 1986; Hakuta, 1986).

2.5 Research and scholarship support credit: A review of the literature

The justification for credit is not only a function of the merits of the courses and how they compare to similar courses in institutions which offer their courses for credit; credit for ESL courses has firm and direct support in the scholarship of applied linguistics, second language acquisition, and the teaching of English to speakers of other languages.

Rose (1989) offers a rationale for credit based on the skills which international students bring to ESL as opposed to the relative lack of such skills found among students in remedial classes. Rose finds several characteristics of the ESL population generally, which are typical of our own students. ESL students a) tend to be already skilled learners in their own languages; b) have more than likely practiced higher-order thinking and analytical reasoning skills such as those demanded by postsecondary courses; and c) are culturally motivated to engage in the collegiate experience. Such students show the kinds of distinct academic promise for which credit is awarded.

Among recent comprehensive studies of credit and ESL, Van Meter (1990), in addition to synthesizing a number of surveys of the frequency of ESL credit, finds a "credit awarding trend" on postsecondary campuses, prompted by "both practical and ethical considerations -- to view international students as promises rather than problems" (p. 3).

In a study which examines the extent of such a trend, Macklin and Ponder (1990) find that of 152 community colleges surveyed, 84.2% grant credit in ESL classes whose level of difficulty (as with ours) is considered at least parallel to that of foreign language courses for American students. Already, it is apparent that the weight of scholarly evidence is on the side of credit, and that solipsism alone accounts for maintaining an anti-credit posture. But there is more. A discussion of the chronology of research leading to findings such as those of Rose-Van Meter-Macklin and Ponder follows:

Greis (1983) surveyed 133 institutions in 33 states and found that 44% awarded credit for ESL classes. If one recalls the 84% found by Macklin and Ponder (1990) seven years later, it is obvious that Van Meter's (1990) hypothesis that granting credit is a *trend* in postsecondary education is *confirmed* Greis goes on to point out that of the 128 institutions he surveyed, 36 respondents (27%) took an anti-credit stance and replied that ESL courses should not be allowed credit. The argument was a minority position even seven years ago!

Why has this trend (for granting credit) existed now for some time? Petersen and Cepeda (1985) offer the rationale . Studies which examine the matter of whether ESL is remedial/non-remedial find that acquisition of a foreign or second language in a setting other than a "natural process" (e. g. ., on the job, playground, or street), requires considerable academic rigor and are thus not remedial, not (in Takoma Park parlance) "pre-college." They meet the "...of sufficient rigor" test for credit in postsecondary education. It is this rationale which informs the resolution taken by TESOL (1986). TESOL, in addition to other factors affirming credit, also makes the distinction between ESL and remedial and finds ESL is not, given the usual criteria associated with "remedial" pre-college instruction, even though it may be prerequisite to some college-level classes, as is the case at Montgomery College The soundness of this rationale has led the California Board of Governors.to require that ESL/EAP courses in all California community colleges be given credit as a general rule. Colleges which want to offer the courses without credit have to petition Sacramento for permission.

Longmire (1986) contributes to a growing rationale for credit in ESL courses. Longmire links credit with academic success as a function of motivation and reinforcement. As with others, she sees an inherent discrimination and double standard when Americans are given credit for foreign language instruction in English, but internationals are denied credit for instruction in what is for them a foreign language, indeed when the medium of instruction (English) continues to be the same foreign language. Longmire advocates political action when necessary, on the ethical grounds of according international students what they deserve and earn, and ending the double standard.

Burgamy and Hafernik (1986), in a national survey of four-year schools, show these concerns as not limited to community colleges, but common throughout higher education: 83% of the colleges surveyed offer six or more credits for ESL courses. There is some suggestion here, although not one advanced by Burgamy and Hafernik, that in the mid-1980s, community colleges may have lagged behind their sister institutions in granting credit in ESL. However, as independent data from Van Meter (1990), and Macklin and Ponder (1990) demonstrate, any such gap has been closed. **Where, one is constrained to ask, is Montgomery College in this national trend?**

Carkin (1987) extends the argument to intensive ESL programs (i.e., those typically found in university "institutes" (like the Maryland English Institute

at College Park) where intensive classes are given unsponsored by and outside the "mainstream" of "regular" academic departments). At Utah State, Carkin reports, 20 ESL courses are elective credit-bearing, applicable to the B.A. degree. Students are allowed a total of 25 credits toward the degree. The Carkin position (institute credit, applicable to the degree), while it contains obvious merit, is not presently advocated for Montgomery College.

The surveys continued through the late 1980s, with Fox and Byrd (1988), who found in a survey for TESOL's Committee on Professional Standards that 79% of postsecondary institutions grant credit for ESL courses and grant from 6 to 12 credits toward a degree, thus demonstrating wide acceptance of the view taken by Carkin (1987). It could be argued that colleges and universities granting only institutional credit, that is, without allowing some ESL credit as applicable toward the degree, are perhaps in a minority among ESL credit-granting institutions.

As Montgomery College (Rockville) continued the revitalization if its ESL program, the faculty undertook its own independent research to explore the extent to which the contexts apparent from scholarly investigation in the field might pertain to the situation on campus. Venkatesh, Ciapetta, and Coolsen (1989) found that Maryland and local area institutions were increasing their commitment to their international constituencies by offering ESL courses for credit -- many with credit applicable toward the degree, as Fox and Byrd (1988) had found. In a subsequent study, Venkatesh and Van Meter (1989) found the practice of granting credit for ESL/EAP courses to be a growing one in community colleges in the Washington Metropolitan and Maryland state areas. As an interesting collateral finding, 21% of the respondents indicated that their institutions grant credit even for courses that are considered below "college level," thus providing an interesting and significant exception to the "college level merits credit; below or 'precollege' level does not merit credit" argument.

The literature representing scholarly findings in the field over a period of time clearly establishes a foundation for the recent findings of Rose (1989), Van Meter (1990), and Macklin and Ponder (1990) who collectively represent the academic revitalization of ESL undertaken by the Rockville Campus Reading and ESL faculty from the view of predominant scholarship.

2.6 Credit is vital to fulfill **institutional mission** and remain **competitive**

Program revitalization including credit is necessary for the College to fulfill its mission of service to the local community (in this case, a rapidly growing international one). As we have noted herein, most colleges in the significant

populations of non-native speakers of English offer ESL courses at multiple levels for credit. We believe that we are charged with providing the international residents and non-residents[5] in Montgomery County[6] with the best educational programs that can be designed. The County expects and deserves nothing less! We know from our research and from our experience and from our associations that the best state-of-the-art college ESL programs in the U. S. are those in which students can earn credit. (See also, Bolton, 1988, 1990). We seek to be remembered among those considered the best in order to continue our established tradition of excellence.

The imperative to do a good job for our international population is further strengthened by the constraints of enrollment and budget. The international student enrollment has been the primary factor in our meeting enrollment projections for at least the current academic year (Helberg, 1991). That is, if it weren't for the international enrollment, our general enrollment would fall below projections and levels of fiscal sufficiency. Moreover, the approved ESL courses are a cost-beneficial means to this end: Offering the approved courses for credit costs the institution nothing and has every potential of enhancing the College's market share in international students.

Scholarly thinking as well as common sense address the issue of credit for ESL courses from the standpoint of marketplace realities. Nationally as well as locally, ESL is a growing concern, "big business" (if one can suspend certain connotations of "business" in concerns academic) (Bolton, 1987). Blakely (1987) points out that while traditional college populations [particularly those drawn from WASP communities] is declining, the ESL/international student population is increasing. McCarger (1982) corroborates this trend, addressing the need for international teaching assistants it brings, and further pointing out that that enrollment in ESL courses is second only to that of Freshman Composition (e.g., EN 101). Indeed, the trend of growing international population and the ESL "market"is very much a fact of demographic life in our own immediate community, as Pressley (1987) points out. As Sayd and Cohn (1991) describe it, Montgomery County is taking on a "rainbow cast" due to the influx of immigrants and minorities -- making up 38% of the school population in 1990 (p. A-19).

Vaughan's (1984) metaphor for the community college mission is, the community college is a social mirror which reflects rather than instigates

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[5] i. e., individuals who may reside in Montgomery County but who, because of Visa Status are officially non-residents and therefore pay out-of-county/out-of-state tuition rates.
[6] The students who come to us from outside the county should be remembered as well.

societal trends. One needs to ask how polished Montgomery College's mirror is or will be. Is Montgomery College positioned where the College can and should be responsive to serving the growing numbers of internationals who want to attend college? Even if some are skeptical, the Chronicle of Higher Education (1988) thinks so. **Montgomery College, Rockville Campus, is one of 30 colleges and universities in the United States which has a foreign student enrollment from 100 or more nations.** Since this is the case, that the Campus is able to attract such a diverse clientele at a time when traditional enrollments are falling, it is apparent that the College needs to be sensitive to the marketplace. International students and their families are good shoppers. We need to be able to offer them the highest quality educational product for their tuition dollar. This, we argue, requires credit. As Van Meter and Venkatesh (1989) conclude:

> The reasons for awarding institutional credit to ESL courses are logical [and local]. Montgomery College is a leading institution with a growing population of international students from at least one hundred twenty different countries. **The College has a serious responsibility to keep pace with the rest of the nation in innovative education.** As the projected figures for the growth of Montgomery County indicate, the need for ESL programs will continue and expand. Students will tend to migrate to colleges that will give [them] credit for earnest effort in language acquisition. If Montgomery College hopes to retain the large international student population, it should move with the trend to award credit for ESL, and reading courses. (pp. 10-11; emphasis added).

The impetus for the revitalization of ESL and the innovations which will bring it about do not stop with the concern to remain competitive. Very clearly, credit is necessary if the college is to maintain the reputation for excellence in ESL which it deserves.

2.7 Limitation on credit.

Offering these courses for institutional credit is not the nose of the camel in the tent. We do not propose credit below the EL 101 level. We look forward to a well coordinated, working relationship with Continuing Education where pre-college work in ESL is and will continue to be offered and where our students will be referred when appropriate.

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2.8. Transferrability between the campuses NOT an issue.

It has been argued that if Rockville ESL courses are offered for credit, students will experience difficulty "transferring" their courses from one campus of the College to another. Since the College is One College, students receive One Transcript. In light of this, there are no transfers. The issue is more one of appropriate placement of students who begin their work on one campus, but continue or finish it on another. As pointed out to the College Curriculum Committee, since the intercampus agreement on overall objectives of ESL remains unchanged, and assuming campuses can share what their exit objectives for each course are, appropriate placement should cause no problems, and does not require any "re-testing" which Takoma Park has announced it would impose on Rockville Students transferring there.

2.9 ESL program revitalization on the Rockville Campus is well-grounded.

As this discussion has already shown, our revitalization of ESL is well-grounded in scholarship, prevailing practices, academic, ethical, and practical considerations. It is also well-grounded in terms of national recognition which the faculty have attracted and the national discourses in which they engage. The scope of the program is truly international as the Chronicle (1988) has shown. Faculty are published in the field. Faculty attend conferences of local, national and international associations and present papers. Faculty are officers in regional and national associations (e.g., Chair, Associate Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, etc.). The feedback in which the faculty engage is invaluable and has been instrumental in the program's revitalization. Over the years, in fact since the mid-1970s, it is these faculty from Rockville who have developed our courses and now propose their revitalization after a 25 year hiatus during which reform was virtually impossible for political reason at intra campus and intercampus levels.

In respected contrast, our colleagues from Takoma Park can make few of these claims and have been completely reactive when it comes to course revision and development. NO proposals for new or revised ESL courses have been forthcoming from Takoma Park since they adopted Rockville-produced courses in the 1970s. Of the four persons who, in recent correspondence to the President claim to be ESL faculty, only two teach full time in the program. They are directed by individuals who teach no EL or RD courses.

In contrast, all Reading and ESL Department faculty are dedicated to teaching full time or primarily so in the program; it is infrequent that they teach in other departments. A glance at recent enrollment figures will show Rockville's ESL program growing, Takoma's declining.

ESL is a mainline program at Rockville. To appearances, ESL has been an academic sideline at Takoma.

With all due respect, **it is time for the tail not to wag the dog**. It is time that a case for revitalization as well-grounded as that presented by the Rockville faculty be supported and a case based on no evidence, based on facile, data-free analysis and serendipitous conclusions which are inimical to revitalization be rejected.

In fairness, however, we wish to recognize and consider the case brought against us by our colleagues from Takoma Park:

3. The Case against Credit for ESL Courses (Takoma Park)

> The case presented by Takoma Park is based on impediment, hindrance, misinterpretation, and affect, not evidence. We understand that a major objection is committed to writing. We address it as well as other objections expressed orally in a meeting of the parties in the Manakee Building on 5 March 1990.

3.1 Major objection: ESL is <u>precollege</u>

This objection is difficult to understand, given the fact that Takoma agrees with the Rockville position that ESL courses are NOT remedial. If they are not remedial, how then can they be precollege, assuming the two terms are similarly glossed?

Nevertheless, as we understand the Takoma objection, since [notwithstanding scholarly evidence and their own concurrence on the "remedial" issue], Takoma faculty "conceive" ESL as a precollege skill and preparatory to EN 101/101A, credit is not merited. If we don't grant credit for pre 101/101A skills, ESL deserves no credit, or so goes the reasoning. Takoma's reasoning is on still another slippery slope here: When even native speakers of English take the placement test for English, the results suggest placement in EN 101 (credit), EN 002 (no credit), or EN 101A (credit). The difference between 101 and 101A is, a student placed in 101A presumably lacks skills required for 101 and gets extra time and instruction

to acquire them. Should credit be denied in EN 101A? Nobody, we find, makes such an argument.

The slope gets even more slippery. Denying institutional credit even for developmental courses (sometimes known "precollege") is at odds with current practice. Abraham (1991) reports that in a recent survey completed by the Southern Regional Education Board, whose membership includes Maryland, 70% of institutions responding grant credit for developmental English and reading courses.

Suppose, however, one were to concede the "precollege means no credit" hypothesis. If the College were to put Takoma's position into actual practice, a "Saturday night massacre" of existing credit courses would follow. The Modern Foreign Language 099 courses, for example, all offered for credit, are tagged in their Catalog descriptions as not satisfying to Liberal Arts language requirements, and are thus "precollege," as is Physics 010, described as preparing students for college-level physics, as is MA 015 which prepares students for math at the college level, as are courses in typing, not to mention activities courses in PE. We suspect the College will not allow such an elitist reading of "credit." Similarly, we expect that the College will not allow elitist readings of "credit" to deny English language learners what they will have earned. and deserved.

Takoma's major objection is propped up by a specious invocation of the Middle States Association (1989) Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education: Standards for Accreditation which holds in part that courses which lead to a degree should be at the college level. Our Takoma Park colleagues have supplied the inference that remedial or precollege work does not warrant academic credit, given Middle States' standards (p. 14). Once again, ours are not remedial or precollege courses.

In addition to the weakness of the "precollege" argument, a close reading of the Middle States text reveals that Middle States has no policy against the granting of institutional credit for ESL courses. In fact, in a recent interview, Dr. John Erickson (1991) who was referred to us as "Staff Liaison for Montgomery College" informed us that **institutional credit** for ESL would **not endanger accreditation**. Erickson, familiar with and with specific reference to p. 14 of Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education: Standards for Accreditation (1989), went on to inform us, as part of his gloss of the passage, that institutional credit was the "standard treatment" for ESL courses

That Middle States holds no proscription against institutional credit for ESL courses is in keeping with its practice and the fact of its having accredited numerous institutions of higher learning -- including community colleges -- where credit is given. Prince George's Community College serves as an immediate, and close example. We believe that Takoma's representation of Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education: Standards for Accreditation (1989) is mistaken. Middle States has no problem with the idea. Does Takoma Park know something Middle States and Rockville don't?

Takoma's major objection goes on to say opine that credit is not necessary for experimentation. We disagree. Grade Point Average is necessary for the kinds of studies of our experimentation required during the "exploratory" phase of ESL revitalization. We need, for example, to be able to test whether students who do well in ESL courses do well in EN 101 and in other courses, compared to their American counterparts. "Do well," the independent variable of such studies, requires CQPA as a dependent variable. Tests of statistical significance require this type of quantification.

3.2 **Minor objections:**

- **Credit for ESL may "skew" [read: "inflate"] GPAs of international students.**

We fail to perceive the skew, except in the imagination, since ESL credits will not apply to the degree. Even if a student takes 100% of the courses in the ESL program (a rarity), she will still have to take 60+ hours of non-ESL work to earn the A.A. degree. Moreover, since Standards of Progress will apply, the survival of a student who excels at ESL (but bombs her other courses -- an unlikely scenario given the cognitive demands of ESL and the motivations of internationals) -- is dubious at best.

- **Until students have the "tools" in which the course description of EN 101 offers experience (1991-92 Catalog, p. 144), credit should not be granted.**

Although we are constrained to skepticism, let us assume that exactly what these tools are is generally known and widely accepted. It is apparent that international students take and pass other courses without such tools. Should credit then be selectively withheld from international students who pass courses in CS, MA, TY, PE, DS, FM, AR, VT, etc.? Please see also our argument on the issue of "remedial" a.k.a. "precollege." By the same logic, should credit be withheld in these and other courses from native speakers

of English, who, not having yet taken EN 101 may be presumed to be equally untooled?

• ESL is an academic preparation program. The comparison to MFL is unfair.

Labels do not diminish the integrity of these courses, or the high and demanding levels of cognitive and linguistic ability which they represent, and which the rest of the field (excepting our Takoma Park colleagues) has come to take for granted.

• English is the "official language of Montgomery College." Students who have not mastered it should not be given credit.

Part of the rationale for this view, as we understand it, is based on the College regulation which requires that international students "Provide evidence of satisfactory English language fluency." (1991-92 Catalog, p. 28, par. C.) Given the fact that international students are admitted, and that many take and do pass credit courses in various fields before they complete EN 101 or even finish the ESL program (Rockville allows out-of-program content courses on a very selective basis), it is apparent that the regulation is not construed as exclusionary by the College. It has nothing to do with granting credit for ESL courses. In addition to revealing an indifference to obvious facts (in addition to other facts presented here, international students are taking courses in some fields where the language of instruction is not English), the "official language" objection is patently xenophobic.

• There may be legal problems in offering ESL for credit.

This red flag is full of holes. If "legal" refers to statutory law, a look at the relevant statutes of the State of Maryland should help:

> "Academic credit required for graduation is exclusive of credit that may be awarded for remedial, basic skill courses, and college orientation"
>
> (Title 13B, Higher Education Commission, Sec. 2, Chapter entitled "Requirements for Associate Degree-Granting Institutions."

The College is legally "safe" in offering ESL for credit on two counts: 1) ESL is not remedial; 2) even if it were, the statute permits credit for remedial

courses when it is not among those required for graduation (i.e., when it is institutional credit).

But will students who misperceive the difference between EN and EL courses become litigious? A Takoma delegate (Curriculum Committee meeting, 5 March 1990) was worried lest there be a case where a student who, for instance, thought she was getting EN 101 in the EL 101 would sue the college. We believe this to be rare to the point of aberration since course syllabi are meticulously careful to point out what a course is and is not. Added to this care is well-known mythology among our international students about the stature if not the horrors of EN 101. In any event, sound legal opinion (and sane lay opinion) would hold that the College, whose catalog descriptions and course syllabi are by any measure clear and distinctive, does not risk litigation by students who misread.

Conclusion.

It is clear the granting of institutional credit in ESL courses is completely justified on solid grounds and the opposition to doing so rests on weak grounds, grounds only extrinsically related to the issues. It is equally clear that the granting of credit is necessary for the continued revitalization of the ESL program and the continued innovative contributions of the faculty who teach in the program.

It is time to grant credit for reasons that are as practical and ethical as they are academically sound and institutionally sufficient. It is time, as Van Meter (1990) has it, to treat students as "promises rather than problems. . . in keeping with world-class instructional approaches and practices" (p. 3).

It is the right thing to do.

Respectfully submitted:

/s/: Ad hoc committee on the preservation of credit for ESL

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